LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour. Editor, R. Palme Dutt.

PEACE in the BALANCE *Clemens Dutt*

BOGY OVER BOURNEMOUTH *Ivor Montagu*

WHERE IS THAT PRODUCTION DRIVE? *J. R. Campbell*

FAMINE *F. le Gros Clarke, M.A.*

LORD KEYNES *M.D.*

TRAVEL NOTES, NO. 2 *R. Palme Dutt*

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Peace in the Balance

THE eventful year since victory in Europe has revealed both the immense consequences of democratic triumph over fascism and the heavy obstacles to reaping the fruits of that victory. Everywhere the old order changes and gives place to the new. Everywhere new forces have been set in motion. The democratic inspiration and unity of the peoples that made victory possible show themselves in an awakening of the peoples that continues to operate as a factor of progress. The new period has ushered in a whole complex of new problems, demanding new solutions and a new stage of popular struggle. At the same time powerful reactionary forces that have survived the war, that seek to restore the old relations shattered by the war and especially concentrate their envenomed hostility against the Soviet Union, mobilise their strength to turn back the wheel of history. They are emboldened by the classical lesson of the lost peace after 1918, when capitalism temporarily abandoned some of its positions and appeared to accept gains made by the people, only to regather its forces and, by a steadily pursued offensive against every democratic achievement, using anti-Bolshevism as the central core and rallying cry of its strategy, succeeded in destroying democracy in Europe and saved capitalism at the expense of sowing the seeds of a new war catastrophe.

The Crisis of Allied Unity.

The conditions are different now, especially because the Soviet Socialist State is no longer a young and weak country struggling for its very existence. But, under new conditions, the same fundamental policy as then is being pursued by all the forces of reaction and the warning is writ large in the history of the inter-war years. Already there are signs of a counter-offensive of reactionary forces directed against the very basis of the people's victory in the war. The Potsdam conference, the first great post-war settlement, laid down a clear path for the continuance of allied unity and democratic advance. It set the seal on the wartime alliance and carried forward the decisions of Teheran and Yalta, laying down the guiding lines for the new period. Since then the high hopes of the peoples have been subjected to a succession of rude shocks. Of course, all the relics of fascism fulminated against Potsdam, but it was not seriously called in question by the Allied Powers themselves. But now the foundations of the peace have been imperilled by atom bomb diplomacy and the furious enmity to the Soviet Union and democratic aspirations. The question of Allied unity has reached a point of crisis which confronts us with a fateful turning-point in post-war history. The decision has to be taken, either to go forward with the Soviet Union in building up democracy in Europe and elsewhere or to repeat 1918 and restore the defeated fascist enemy as a weapon against socialism.

Paris Conference.

The uneasy balance of the contradictory forces in the present situation was evident in the stagnation of the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers. Actually, the meeting was more business-like and more productive of results than could be judged from the chorus of hostile criticism in the capitalist press, which predicted failure beforehand and distorted every difference in order to attack the Soviet Union. The conference did not break down and a certain amount of progress was achieved in the preparation of the peace treaties precisely because the underlying basis of the democratic

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settlement of Europe, agreed to by the Allies in the Potsdam decisions, was not explicitly gone back upon. But again and again the Soviet Union was left to fight alone for democratic solutions and the present crisis in the acceptance of those principles was sharply revealed.

Hypocrisy and Reality.

The virtuous scribes who regarded the Versailles Conference after World War No. 1 as a triumph of morality tried to depict the Paris Conference as a gamblers' den in which, owing to Russia's pursuit of power politics, the Anglo-Saxon powers were forced to play the same game and try to overtrump or outwit her. The hypocrisy of the pretence that the reasonable and morally-founded proposals of Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bevin were blocked at every turn by the obduracy of Mr. Molotov, intent on plans of aggrandisement of the Soviet Union, is as nauseating as false. The claim that the Russians bargained on the level of horse-trading deals while Britain acted solely on the high moral principles of the "pledge to the Senussi" and the "ethnic rights" of the Italians in the Julian March is rightly described by the *New Statesman* as "sheer cant!" But the tactics of anti-Soviet slanderers have always consisted in accusing the U.S.S.R. of crimes which are precisely the hallmark of the reactionary capitalism whose interests they defend. It is particularly those who brandish the atom bomb and openly glorify the aim of Anglo-Saxon world domination who vehemently accuse the Soviet Union of "power politics."

The Meaning of Appeasement.

The latest popular propaganda weapon of anti-Soviet policy is the argument that acceptance of any proposal made by the Soviet Union would be "appeasement" and have the same disastrous consequences as the policy of giving in to Hitler in the years before the war. The crude notion that "being tough with Russia" excites national pride and applause among the mass of ordinary people has been found to be inadequate. Mr. Bevin's anti-Soviet foreign policy is not popular. Therefore, the new line of defence is being put forward, in labour official quarters and elsewhere, that the Anglo-American stand against the U.S.S.R. is intended to avoid a new "Munich." It is not likely that this device will be much more successful. People will not easily forget that the substance of appeasement was a positive policy of support for fascism and refusal to negotiate defence of peace and democracy with the Soviet Union. A policy which gets its loudest applause from fascist Spain, and which repeats the pre-war anti-Soviet attitude can hardly, therefore, be described as resistance to appeasement. Nor is it accidental that the foremost champions against "a new Munich" are precisely those who were loudest in wishing "God-speed" to Chamberlain and applauding Hitler's anxiety for peace.

The Restoration of Capitalist Freedom.

The difficulties encountered at Paris lay in the fact that the British and American representatives had come to the Conference with what seems to be a pre-agreed set of decisions which they attempted to impose by dictation. In the second place, in sharp contrast to the character of the Versailles Conference after the first world war, the difficulties and differences arose, not from "nauseating" bargaining between imperialist representatives, but from the struggle, resolutely and skilfully waged by Mr. Molotov, to prevent violation of basic decisions already taken by the Allies in common, and to defend the right of the small nations and the new democracies who fought and suffered in the Allied cause. The American Secretary

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of State, dutifully echoed by Mr. Bevin, came to the point of questioning the execution of the Potsdam decisions, although he halted there. It is noteworthy that *The Times* emphasises that one of the chief disputes was due to the "uncompromising American insistence on opening the markets of South-Eastern Europe to free competition from the West." The United States looks on Europe as a sphere for free capitalist enterprise: the danger of British subordination to American policy in return for the loan lies precisely in a Labour Government in Britain becoming committed to the restoration of free capitalist enterprise and big trusts in Europe, involving resistance to all the popular democratic forces that have arisen during and since the war.

The Italian Colonies.

The discussion at Paris on the future of the Italian colonies was especially revealing for the light it shed on the present tendencies of British colonial policy. The Soviet proposal was made in accordance with Article 76 of the United Nations Charter, which calls for a provisional trusteeship with participation of the native population and leading to real independence within a specified period. While accusing the U.S.S.R. of "cutting across the throat of the British Empire," Mr. Bevin put forward proposals which were transparently inspired by strategic considerations, although defended on high moral grounds. This applies to the idea of lopping off a piece of Abyssinia to round off the territory of British Somaliland, which would be a plain violation of the rights of United Nations members as guaranteed in the Charter. It applies also to the proposal of "independence" for Libya. Imperialism has always been adept at devising democratic phraseology to cover up the reality of domination over subject peoples, as witness the invention of "mandates" after the other world war as a thin veil for annexation. In this case, however, a formal declaration of "independence" would be a cover so transparent as to be ridiculous. With British troops in possession it would not only alter nothing in the actual dependent state of the territory, but could only serve as an excuse for avoiding international control. This use of "independence" as a catchword irrespective of its actual content is coming to play a special role in present-day British foreign policy.

Transjordan "Independence."

A classical model of the methods now being adopted to retain the substance of imperialist domination while appearing to concede the demands of the colonial peoples is seen in the Treaty with Transjordan. This Treaty was negotiated while British troops were in the country and its real essence is to be found in the special Annex to the Treaty which provides for their continued stay. This Annex lays down: "(1) Britain may station armed forces in Transjordan; (2) Transjordan will grant facilities for the movement and training of such forces and for the transport of their supplies; (3) British forces will have the right to use their own signals communication system; (4) Transjordan will safeguard, maintain and develop the communication lines required." Under this Treaty, British advisers will hold key positions enabling Britain to maintain control of affairs in Transjordan more effectively and exclusively than even under a trusteeship or mandate. It is not surprising that the Treaty has been received with hostile criticism by the Arab world, which regards it, not as a step towards Arab independence, but as a development intended to forestall action by the United Nations Organisation and which can only be an obstacle in the way of other Arab countries achieving their national independence. It is clear that Transjordan is to be transformed into one of the chief

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bases for British forces in the Middle East and made a jumping-off ground for the extension of British capitalist influence in the Middle East.

The Withdrawal from Egypt.

The new conditions in the Middle East are revealed most forcibly by the declaration that all British troops will be withdrawn from Egypt. On the one hand, this has been greeted by all the representatives of Blimpdom as an ignominious surrender of British imperial rights. Mr. Churchill weighs in with talk of positions cast away "with great shame and folly," and even more modern Conservatives are filled with profound misgivings. They fail to see that 1946 is not 1936 and that the war has given enormous impetus to the national liberation movement in all dependent countries. On the other hand, the announcement has been treated as a grand example of democratic advance by the official defenders of Labour foreign policy. Here at last, it was emphasised, was a clear proof that there was no "continuity" with Tory foreign policy. Why, then, does Lord Altrincham, former Minister of State in the Middle East, have to record that "the declaration was coldly and critically received by the Egyptian press"? This is not a bargaining trick to make light of a concession. Under cover of a generous gesture, the Egyptians see a manoeuvre more complicated but similar in trend to that involved in granting "independence" to Transjordan. They anticipate that the conclusion of a military alliance between Britain and Egypt will preserve the existing dominant position of Britain under new forms. Already the formation of an Anglo-Egyptian Aviation Company to control airways and aerodromes in Egypt is regarded as a pointer in this new situation.

Indian Independence

By far the greatest public attention has been roused by the proposals of the British Government Commission for realising the independence of India. The proposed change in the relations between this country and the 400 millions who constitute by far the major proportion of the British Empire is undoubtedly "momentous" in its significance. But, whether described as a "blue-print of freedom" or denounced a further stage in the "liquidation of the Empire" under labour rule, the Government plans have not caused real anxiety in the Tory camp. The background of the tense situation in India, characterised by the recent history of riots, the Indian Naval mutiny and the impending famine, is responsible, more than any Party considerations, for the effort to break the deadlock that has existed so long. It is already traditional that fresh negotiations are always undertaken in India when the situation has reached explosion point. In this instance the Commission set out armed with a well-prepared tactical plan of operations. By skilfully playing on the political divisions in India they achieved the expected result of not being faced with any united demand, so that, with the initiative in their hands, they could at the appropriate moment produce the scheme which they had had up their sleeves all the time.

A plan to stay in India.

Whether the plan outlined in the White Paper is acceptable or workable or not, it cannot be described as full independence. Instead of a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, the proposals envisage a constitution-making body elected indirectly through the Provincial legislatures, which are themselves elected by a minute fraction of the electorate, and an interim Central Government during an indefinite period, formed on the basis of the existing divisions and headed by the Viceroy, presumably with veto powers in reserve. Thus, for a long period ahead there will be

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neither independence nor democratic self-government. It is not a plan to leave India, but a plan to stay in India. It is a settlement, essentially imposed from without, aimed at gaining the support of a limited upper section of the population and the reactionary feudal princes of the Indian States so as to safeguard British strategic and imperialist interests in India from the rising tide of mass forces demanding freedom. British troops will remain and may even be increased. Such a solution, while made possible and even inevitable owing to the lack of unity in India, can only be temporary and will not forestall a later crisis. The situation would be transformed if there were a united front of the National Congress and the Muslim League. In India, also, unity of the masses is the condition for achieving freedom.

The Future of Germany.

All the anti-Soviet and anti-democratic forces, all the survivals of fascism, combine to attack the Potsdam decisions, for they rightly recognise that the fulfilment of these decisions is the key to the victory of democracy in the postwar world. Potsdam laid down in detail the political and economic principles of the treatment of Germany, providing for the thoroughgoing destruction of fascism and militarism, the elimination of trusts and cartels and ensuring the political rights of working-class organisations and the development of democratic institutions. Emboldened by the anti-Soviet trend of British and American policy, more and more voices are raised to denounce the Potsdam decisions. It is not surprising that they should be attacked by Sir William Beveridge, whose enthusiasm for Franco Spain has been so flamboyantly expressed. Mr. Michael Foot, in his new role as anti-red champion, naturally declares the Potsdam Agreement "utterly unworkable" and its economic principles to be "madness on a cosmic scale." All these utterances inevitably must lead to the policy of rebuilding Germany as a counterpoise to the Soviet Union, a return to the fatal policy pursued in the inter-war years. "The only wise course now for the Western Powers," says Scrutator in the *Sunday Times*, "is to develop their zones on separate and Western lines." Mr. Boothby's alternative plan to Potsdam, as expounded in *The Times*, has the same formula expressly advocating that the Western zones should be part of a Western bloc. Mr. G. D. H. Cole also calls for acceptance of a divided Germany and the development of a Socialist Western Europe.

The Role of Social Democracy.

All this propaganda is heavenly manna to the undestroyed survivals of Nazism in Germany. For the open sympathisers with fascism this is no headache. But the British labour movement and the mass of the people in the democratic countries are intensely disquieted by the reports of fascist revival in Germany. For the champions of anti-Sovietism, therefore, the problem consists in restoring a strong Germany as part of the anti-Soviet bloc without an obvious restoration of Nazi fascism. The *Economist* has recently published a series of articles on this subject and thinks that it has discovered a solution. It starts out with the assumption "that Communism should be resisted in the name of democracy is obvious." But the only way to make this policy acceptable is by giving full backing to the Social Democrats against the Communists. Thus the organ of British capital comes to the conclusion that "the task is to turn the Social Democrats into a majority." Capitalism is to "adopt" Social Democracy as a patron adopts a hireling. The word is used in the article, which states: "Nor is it necessary to wait until the Social

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Democrats prove themselves to be a majority before adopting them.'' At the same time it is naively admitted that ''no amount of backing of Dr. Schumacher, the leading socialist in the Western Zone, in his fight against fusion with the Communists will be effective as long as the Communists can compare the 'social backwardness' of the British zone with Socialisation and land reform in the eastern zone.'' Therefore there must be some show of public control of essential industry and so on, but the main thing is to discard the ''international machine wrecking'' of the Potsdam policy and remove the restriction to the development of German industry. The total effect is to reveal how closely the anti-Soviet line harks back towards a fatal repetition of 1918. Were not then the German Social Democrats encouraged against the Communists and was not the role of German Social Democracy precisely to smooth the way for Nazi fascism? This is the path recommended by the *Economist* and involved in the policy of hostility to German working-class unity which is now being so zealously pursued by Transport House.

Democratic Unity.

The crucial question of Germany brings to a focus the disastrous possibilities that may ensue from the present anti-Soviet policy. Only by a return to the principles of Allied unity forged in the prosecution of the war, only by the firmest support of the democratic peoples and their Governments can the mounting offensive of the reactionary forces be checked. The alternative policy of restoring ''free'' capitalism and the power of the international trusts and cartels costs the sacrifice of economic and social reconstruction at home so as to defray the heavy burden of so-called ''commitments'' for maintaining troops against popular movements all over the world and finally—for war against the Soviet Union. The Teheran declaration, announcing the new United Nations Organisation, proclaimed: ''We shall seek the co-operation and active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and mind are dedicated, as are our own peoples, to the elimination of tyranny, slavery, oppression and intolerance.'' How is that being fulfilled when a country like Albania, for instance, where the now victorious resistance forces of the people fought for their country's freedom fully as heroically as in France or elsewhere, is left standing on the doormat of UNO and word is spread that its free, democratic Constitution is ''totalitarian''? It is a disquieting sign when such a vital democratic force as the World Trade Union Federation, with its sixty-six million organised trade unionists, is not only cold-shouldered by UNO, but treated with scant respect even by a Labour Government in Britain.

We are in a period of great world changes, full of hopes for humanity. To realise those hopes all our efforts must be bent towards realising the unity of the peoples and the unity of the labour movement throughout the world.

CLEMENS DUTT.

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Bogy Over Bournemouth

by IVOR MONTAGU

WHEN the Labour Party Conference assembles this year, it will be the first time that it has done so with a majority Labour Government in office.

This is bound to give a new, distinctive note to the Conference. There is a feeling of pride in the movement, and expectancy.

The election gave a smashing mandate for new men, new methods, new objectives—a clean break with the past. Parliamentary procedure in Britain is of a nature to impose bottlenecks in legislation, even by a handsome majority. Nor Rome nor Socialism can be built in a day. But how does the movement and the country feel the Government is making out?

The prompt nationalisation of the Bank of England, the Trades Disputes Act repealed, the mines nationalisation bill, the health bill, the declaration of intention to nationalise steel, have all been welcomed and felt as an earnest that Labour is this time indeed carrying out its programme. The Indian Mission and its proposals, the Premier's declaration on Egypt, which has roused the windy wrath of Mr. Churchill, are generally accepted as signs that Labour means to "do something" about the more discreditable aspects of imperial relationships. Not only the movement, but the country as a whole, has so far shown an adult appreciation that the main cause of the lag in housing is the inheritance from the past. The defects of the Education Act, which Labour must now administer, are accepted as stemming from the Coalition.

There are detail eddies. Creech-Jones's defence of flogging in the West Indies was such a one. The dilatoriness of pensions improvement is another. Rents and fares, furniture and clothing prices are already threatening to go up. The Budget does not even make a start with lifting the balance of taxation away from the workers. The worst shock in the relationships of Labour outside the House with Labour in office—a field in which from their even early days the minority Labour Governments were so rich in giving shocks—has been the failure to help the agricultural workers to their £4 10s.; it is reflected by a resolution on the Bournemouth agenda which may reveal feeling deeper than supposed.

We are not here casting a balance of positive and negative in Labour's record, but sketching the sentiment of the movement, which is certainly pleased so far with what has been done at home.

But it is not a blind gratification. All the more active in Labour's ranks are quite aware that nationalisation is not yet Socialism. They are aware that as yet no assault has penetrated to the citadel of class-power in Britain. They note the generous compensations. They see the composition of the Boards to govern the Bank of England and the mining industry. The changes in neither of these touch the kernel of capitalism in Britain, as, for example, the divestment of the steel barons is bound to. They realise that the real fight is all ahead.

They realise to accomplish Labour's programme and effect real changes in Britain, Labour's great majority in the House of Commons is not, in itself, enough. It must be supported by the maximum popular backing outside the House.

It is this realisation of the magnitude of the task ahead which explains why Communist affiliation has received more support from Labour Party activists now, with Labour's majority won, than at any past time, when some supported it only because they

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thought of it as a means to help forward a majority. It is seen as the key to the rallying of all forces for victory over the capitalist counter-offensive.

It is against this background that must be perceived the raging, tearing anti-communist incitement of the Right-wing, which has received the 100 per cent. backing of all capitalist press organs, from the *Daily Telegraph* to the *Daily Mirror* and including the *News-Chronicle* and the *News of the World.*

The big monopoly interests have always understood that "there are more ways of killing a cat than by stabbing it to death with a blacking-brush," as they say in the North. With the Tory Party a bent instrument in their hands, momentarily incapable of serving their purpose of preserving capitalism, the next best course for them is to strengthen whatever will keep the assailants of capitalism weak. Hence the unholy line-up behind the Right-wing splitting tactics.

Characteristic of this campaign is that it is being carried out with a virulence paralleled hitherto only in Nazi literature. Unprecedented methods—the mobilisation of resources of Government, including the B.B.C.; disregard of all democratic principle—the pressure for a one-sided revision of decisions on affiliation by constituent bodies on plea of "changed circumstances"—i.e., disregard of mandates in favour of affiliation or their review by ballot vote, without any corresponding review of mandates against affiliation; reckless misrepresentation—Laski's shocking twist of the Dimitrov speech ; slander and pejoration—Attlee's moral attitudes and "unfit for civilised intercourse" line.

This blizzard recalls only the similar campaign waged at the time of the election, at that time *against* Labour, with the bandied charges of "Gestapo," "totalitarianism," disregard of the Constitution, this time supported with misquotation *of*, not *by*, Laski, levied by the Tories.

As then against Labour, so now by Labour's leaders, the invective and the irrelevancies are designed to deflect the attention from vital issues. The Bolshy bogy is to play the role of an iron curtain. What is all this pre-Bournemouth anti-Communist brouhaha intended to conceal?

The study of another part of the agenda reveals very clearly.

There are nineteen resolutions on Government foreign policy generally; of these no fewer than fifteen express degrees of concern and only one supports it. There are, in addition, four specifically calling for breaking of relations with Franco Spain, five for improvement of relations with U.S.S.R. and seventeen opposing the Government's maintenance of Tory-appointed personnel in the Foreign Office and diplomatic service.

There is not the slightest dubiety that the general satisfaction felt by the movement at Labour's start in the field of home policy is matched by ever-growing anxiety at its continuance of Tory policy in the foreign field.

The Labour Government's present foreign policy, which the Right-wing leadership is determined to pursue, is something entirely foreign from the aspirations and traditions of Labour, or from its policy declarations, including the report on International Post-War Settlement, framed by the N.E.C. and adopted by the December, 1944, Conference, on which the election was fought.

It is abhorrent to Labour. Inevitably a betrayal of Socialism in every land.

To put it over on Labour requires a gigantic "confidence trick." And the anti-Communist scare is the only one that will fit the bill. When 70 Labour M.P.s rebelled at the Government's Greek policy, the charge of "Crypto-Communism"—with all that it im-

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plies in denial of the fruits of office, eventual expulsion—soon brought most of them to heel. If "Communists" can be painted as those whose touch defiles, the results of the Laski-Phillips missionary tour, preaching disunity throughout the continent (in electoral damage to the Left and new, refreshed courage for fascists) can be depicted not as disaster for the Socialist cause, but as the purifying of a Social Democratic virgin threatened by low associations. (A strange rescue by Perseus. The fascist dragon eats Andromeda, but her honour is unsullied.)

All this is accompanied inevitably by an anti-Soviet campaign in which the *Daily Herald* easily outdoes the *Daily Mail*.

The purpose is clear. The malignancy and energy with which the Communists are pursued is designed to distract attention from the fact that, under cover of the hunt, the policy being followed in Indonesia, Greece, Spain and elsewhere is one that flouts the principles not merely of "the Left," but common to the entire movement.

It is designed to conceal the realities of world politics, the partnership with the capitalist United States *against* the Socialist Soviet Union, the facts that all over Germany Nazis rush for succour to the authorities set up by the Labour Government and the U.S.A. and that the fascists all over Europe pray for Byrnes and Bevin to "be firm."

Suddenly, the Labour Party, nine-tenths of whose members and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of whose electoral supporters have never heard of Social Democracy and have no idea what it was, are told that the Labour Party is "Social Democrat." The nudity of imperialism is hidden in an imaginary suit labelled "Social Democracy versus Communism," and when the simple child exclaims "But that's just the old game—Capitalism versus Socialism—that the Tories used to play," he has to be slapped down and named a Communist.

In this context we see the endeavour of the Right-wing leadership to establish the Labour Party as "anti-Communist," "Social Democrat," "defender of Western civilisation," to exploit governmental power and the natural loyalty of the movement toward the Government that it has achieved, in order to commit the movement to a foreign policy which it mistrusts. Anti-Communism—for the Right-wing leadership—is a means to an end; a means permanently to discredit and emasculate and ultimately to debar any Left in the Party; a cunning dodge to filch a mandate for post-conference hunting-down of all who stand for true Socialist principle in the unions as well.

The proposed Constitution change is part and parcel. Hurried in under circumstances making impossible prior discussion by the rank and file and mandating of delegates, this haste is excused by the discovered urgent need to change the character of the Party, its federalism being said to be out of date. Yet the change in the Constitution makes no difference to this federalism at all. All affiliations remain. With the agreement with the Co-op. Party, the co-work of various parties in the constituencies condemned in the Constitutional change is even enhanced. The beginning and end of the proposal is simply an endeavour to exploit the favourable position of the Right-wing leadership at this year's conference for an anti-Communist measure that it is hoped may be effective more than three years.

Hoped. Vainly hoped. For the facts of life are not to be side-tracked in this way.

The character of the anti-affiliation campaign waged by the Right-wing,

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the government machinery at its disposal, the political blackmail it has not scrupled to use, the loyalty it must command as incumbent on behalf of labour in the mighty seats, all prevent the issue being voted upon its merits, are liable to prevent the figures from reflecting the enormous and growing support for unity which has evoked all this venom from the Right-wing. But figures are not decisive. Life itself is decisive. When Chamberlain flew to Munich, Gallacher's was the only voice raised to foretell ruin amid the general betrayal. Now the world knows that Gallacher was right, and Munich is a word of shame. The consequences of a policy of working-class disunity and of a bloc between the major empires against the Soviet Union, are disaster to our own people and to all mankind, as certain and inevitable as that resulting from the same policy ten years ago. Splitting the forces of progress, counter-attack from reaction, ruin to Labour's programme at home, international conflict climaxing in war—these will be the inevitable sequels which can only be checked by unity. Not all the ingenuities of Transport House can lock the door against penetration by the teaching of life.

To rallying all who learn that teaching, to averting that disaster, to rescuing the labour movement and the people and the cause of Socialism, the Communists are dedicated.

Where is that Production Drive?

by J. R. CAMPBELL

WHAT has happened to the production drive started by the Government with a deafening blare of publicity, a few weeks ago? The position of the country was outlined to representatives of the unions and the employers. Since then nothing has happened. In field, factory and mine, things go on as before.

The employers, for reasons we will specify later, are not particularly interested in the success of this production drive and the workers are apathetic. Unless something special is done the drive may be written off as a stunt which failed. This would be deplorable, for it would be a failure, not of the Government alone, but of the entire labour movement.

There is no use burking the fact that participation in a production drive within the capitalist system of society in peace time is something that is alien to the traditions of the trade union movement. Hitherto the onus for securing increases in production has rested on the employers. In their desire to accumulate, they have speeded up the workers and introduced new machinery which turned out a greater quantity of goods with less labour. The unions have sought to resist the speeding-up processes, have fought to ensure that the maximum number of workers was retained to work the new machines and have tried to get some share of the increased production in the form of higher wages and shorter hours.

Periods of speeding up and of the rapid introduction of new processes are associated in the workers' minds with the breaking up of cherished crafts, the need to acquire new skills and the displacement of workers even in the midst of a boom. Further, the hectic productive activity has usually outrun the consuming power of society and ended in a devastating economic crisis.

These considerations took a back seat during the war, partly because the worker was anxious to make sacrifices

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in order to defeat fascism and partly because he knew that there was an unlimited market. He could not "work himself out of a job." He is more than doubtful if such conditions will obtain in peace time even under a Labour Government.

To convince him otherwise we require not only to bring forward new arguments, but also to show him, in practice, that the control of industry, by a Labour Government, really opens out new perspectives. We have got to note that the policy of the employers in most industries, if the Government does not force them to change it, is calculated to confirm the workers' fear and strengthen their traditional attitude to production.

What are the arguments for increased production in present conditions?

Increased production is necessary, first, in order to place the economy of the country on a self-supporting basis in the shortest possible time. With the loss of Britain's foreign investments, a greater quantity of exports has to be sent abroad in order to obtain the same quantity of foreign food and raw materials as we did before the war. If the amount of wealth available for distribution amongst the various social groups inside Britain is to increase, we need more workers in productive industry and a greater production per man employed. We have not an infinite time in which to put the country on a self-supporting basis. The United States loan (which has disadvantages, as well as advantages) will give us a breathing space of about two years to rebuild our foreign trade. If we fail, cuts in our food and raw material supplies with all the consequences they entail will constitute a first-class crisis —a glorious opportunity for a Tory comeback.

Besides, we need increased production in order to fill the shops with much needed goods and make wages and salaries mean more than they do today. The black market should be suppressed by every administrative device possible, but only increased production of commodities overtaking increased consuming power can eliminate the conditions in which black markets grow.

Without increased production it will not be easy to realise the programme of the Government, which requires the rapid construction of new houses, hospitals, health centres and schools, not to mention the building of large numbers of new factories.

Increased production will lighten the burden of these new services on the taxpayers. Naturally we have got to see that the taxation burden falls on the rich as far as is possible, under a controlled capitalist society. Nevertheless, some taxes will have to be borne by the workers. The higher the volume of production, the higher the workers' share of the increased output, the smaller will be the burden of taxation on the individual working-class income.

More must be done by the unions to impress upon the workers that we are in the midst of a real economic crisis—of an unusual kind. The welfare of the British worker will be just as much imperilled by a shortage of the foreign raw materials that are required by British industry as it would be by the traditional economic crisis due to overproduction. It would be a political blunder of the first magnitude to allow ourselves to be so obsessed by the danger of a crisis of the traditional kind in the future that we take no steps to combat the real economic crisis of a special kind that is with us at the present moment.

We must be prepared to adapt our policy to the fact that the labour movement is to some extent in the political and economic leadership of the country. The labour movement cannot expect the capitalist class to

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interest itself in the swift reconstruction of British economy. So long as they get the quite considerable profits that they are earning at the moment the capitalists are content to jog along without making any considerable effort. If, as a result of this attitude, the economic difficulties increase, they calculate it may be possible to use them as a means of unseating the Government.

Trade unionists cannot tolerate this indifferent attiude in their own ranks. They have returned a Labour Government after years of effort; that Government is confronted with great economic difficulties which can only be overcome with the co-operation of the unions. If it fails to overcome these difficulties the whole working-class movement and not the least the trade unions, will suffer a heavy set-back.

The Government, on its side, must do more to convince the unions that when the replacement boom is over there will not be a recurrence of the frightful unemployment that existed between the wars. It is not enough to tell them that the Government is committed to carrying through a full employment policy; that by its ownership of the Bank of England, certain key industries, and its control of the economic system in general, it will be able to take positive steps to combat mass unemployment. That is the theory. But it is difficult to win acceptance for it in Scotland and South Wales, where pools of long-term unemployment are existing at the present moment. In both countries the Government has revealed some of the steps which have been taken to induce new industries to settle in these areas. But an examination of the type of industry which is being established suggests that while they may provide much-needed employment for women workers, they will not absorb the male unemployed. Clearly there is a limit to the amount of industry which can be induced to settle in those areas.

That limit has probably been reached and it is up to the Government from now on to compel industries to settle in those areas.

Then there is the shipbuilding industry, at the present moment in the midst of a post-war replacement boom, which will probably exhaust itself before the end of the Government's period of office. Has the Government any long-term perspective for the shipbuilding industry? Is it considering any alternative form of employment—say in civil engineering projects—which would absorb the black squads in shipbuilding should their industry run into a slump?

Then there are a whole series of industries which are to remain under private ownership, but are to go through a drastic process of reorganisation. Working parties are discussing ways and means of reorganising those industries, but only one working party report—on cotton—has so far found its way into the hands of the Government and this report will reflect the deep divisions of opinion in the working party itself.

The Government is now faced with the necessity of deciding its own policy and carrying it out with the utmost vigour. The forms of control machinery which are set up to carry through the reorganisation must be such as will give confidence to the workers in the industry. The Control Board, or whatever kind of machinery is set up, must be responsible to a Minister, answerable to Parliament and the personnel of the Board must in itself be a guarantee that a serious fight will be waged against the vested interests which will obstruct reorganisation.

Further, the Government must be prepared to survey the functions and the purposes of the joint production machinery, industry by industry. The Trades Union Congress has called for

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joint production committees from the national to the workshop level in every industry. Over the greater part of industry such committees are virtually non-existent. It is for the Government to approach the unions and the employers to ensure that real progress is made in setting up this machinery.

What is to be the content of the production drive in peace-time? Much harm has been done by the suggestion implicit in many speeches that it should take precisely the same form as it did during the war—when the workers submitted to long hours of labour and speeding up. There will be no working-class response to such suggestions. The keynote must now be the struggle for better utilisation of the energies of the workers by means of increased efficiency. This means that the workers must be prepared to fight for improved methods of production within the existing plants. It means, above all, that the unions should take the lead in the drive for the modernisation of all industries through the introduction of the most efficient technique and be prepared to fully co-operate to secure its fullest possible utilisation.

Of course there are things which the unions can do on the basis of existing productive methods. They can take a strong line in favour of the reduction of absenteeism and for the maintenance of a reasonable level of workshop discipline. These, however, must be subordinate to the drive for increased efficiency.

Clearly there must be a closer link between increased productive effort and increased earnings than there was in war time. This is the core of the demand for a national wages policy that was made at several of the production conferences. There is no support in the trade union movement for a national wages policy which means a freezing of existing earnings as proposed by the Tories, or the ultimate fixing of wages by state planners as some Fabians have come perilously near to suggesting.

The forms of collective bargaining under socialism will no doubt be different from those prevailing at the present moment, but we have got to remember that in the lifetime of this Government 80 per cent. of industry will remain in private ownership. In such circumstances, to ask the unions to give up their normal functions of pressure, negotiation, and if necessary strikes, plays into the hands of the worst sections of the employers.

The clamour for a restrictive wage policy has caused the Trade Union Congress to express doubts as to whether the Government should interest itself in wage questions at all. "Leave it all to the bargaining of individual unions," expresses the Trades Union Congress attitude. This is not consistent with the attitude that the Congress takes on the forty hours week. Here it asks for a combination of government legislation and trade union negotiations. The Government is to write the principle of the forty hours week into law and the unions are to negotiate its application to particular industries.

The same combination of Government pressure and trade union negotiations is imperative in relation to wages. The Government should declare that it is interested in helping the unions to secure higher wages, partly at the expense of profits and partly as their share of increased productive efficiency and that it will act against those employers who are resisting this high wage policy.

Does anyone imagine that the principle of equal pay and the rate for the job is going to be obtained in the measurable future without some Government intervention? The Government could, for example, apply the principle in relation to its own employees (including in that term the employees of all nationally owned

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industries and services) and should encourage the local authorities to do likewise.

This would strengthen the negotiations of the unions with outside employers.

The Government must be prepared to intervene in cases where there is a deadlock that is prejudicial to national production policy. We do not know whether it was the pressure of the Government, or of public opinion, or both, which forced the independent members of the Agricultural Wages Board to recede from their position of refusing any general wages increase in that industry. Clearly, however, had they persisted in their stubborn attitude, the Government would have had to intervene or see the national drive for increased production wrecked. Surely the same applies to all other low paid industries.

Lastly, the Government must make available to the country the facts as to the relation of profits (including those placed to reserves) and wages in the various industries. At the present moment industrial negotiations take place in the dark. The amount of dividend paid by the big firms in an industry is known, but the extent of their reserves is not. The inland revenue authorities have this information at their disposal, but hitherto it has been withheld from the public on the grounds of business secrecy.

A controlled capitalist economy such as the Government is endeavouring to run must be "an economy with glass walls." All the relevant facts must be known to the unions in order that they can conduct their policy in the interest of their members and of the people at large.

Those are some of the elements of a high wage policy, which is an integral part of the drive to raise production. For increased production is a means to an end, namely, the overcoming of the crisis of British economy and the guaranteeing of a rising standard of life for all workers.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into any correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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Lord Keynes

WHEN Lord Keynes died on April 21st, at the age of sixty-two, *The Times* commented editorially that the world had been deprived "of one of its great men." Few public figures of recent memory have been so many-sided in the qualities and the activities for which they are remembered. Essentially a liberal in ideas and temperament, with roots in bourgeois England of the nineteenth century, he would probably have been called in certain continental circles of the last century an essential *ideologue*; and he had an attachment to ideas and a faith in their influence deriving from the traditions of eighteenth century rationalism. Yet it is hard to say whether he is better known as economic theorist or as man of affairs. It was his resignation as leading Treasury representative at Versailles after the First World War, because of his disagreement with the reparation clauses of the Treaty, and the publication of his reasons in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, that earned him public fame. This book had a surprisingly large circulation and a widespread influence, including an influence throughout the labour movement (the Labour Research Department issuing a cheap edition for trade unionists). On it Lenin once commented that "he arrived at conclusions which are stronger, more striking and more instructive than any argument a communist revolutionary could advance"* (Second Congress of Comintern). Not least among the qualities which won for it a deserved reputation were the vivid pen-portraits of the leading personalities at the conference, drawn with remarkable skill and wit and a quick intuitive insight into men and situations (a quality which he admired in Lloyd George and himself shared).

In the two decades between the wars he wrote two main works on monetary theory (apart from his less substantial *Tract on Monetary Reform* of 1923) in addition to being a powerful influence in the Report of the Macmillan Committee on Finance and Industry of 1931. The first of these, the two-volume *Treatise on Money* of 1930, was transitional as far as the development of his thought was concerned. The second, published in 1936, was the famous *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, which has been the centre of so much discussion and has influenced policy more than any work of theoretical economics of recent memory. It has begotten a school in this country and in America which regards the work as marking a revolution in economic thought. Inspired as it so largely was by the experience of the Great Crisis of 1929-33, it did much to furnish theoretical ammunition to the protagonists of Roosevelt's New Deal across the Atlantic and to inspire the various Full Employment policies which hold the stage today (e.g., Prof. Alvin Hansen and the Murray Employment Bill in U.S.A.; the 1944 White Paper and Sir W. Beveridge in this country).

At the beginning of the war he was made a director of the Bank of England (of whose policies he had earlier been so strong a critic), and returning to the Treasury he was not only a guiding hand in war-time taxation and loan and money-market policy, but also architect of the British contribution to the Bretton Woods scheme for an international monetary fund. His final mission (which sapped his strength and hastened the end) was as chief British negotiator in the hardly-contested Washington discussions over the American loan; and the last of his rare speeches in the House of Lords was one in defence of the Loan Agreement.

* Because "drawn," added Lenin, "by a ruthless opponent of Bolshevism."

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But it is not only as an economist and a man of affairs that he will be remembered. As a master of English prose, enriched by a remarkably wide knowledge of literature, he stood in the front rank: a quality best exhibited, perhaps, in his *Essays in Biography*. As a patron of the arts he believed that art should belong to the people: as founder of the Cambridge Arts Theatre, he made it over to the municipality; as chairman of C.E.M.A. and a director of Sadlers' Wells, he contributed not a little to making these the considerable popular forces that they are in the cultural life of this country today. As a teacher and inspirer of the young he had few equals. In the company of students his rare charm of manner showed to advantage. Treating them always as his intellectual equals, he devoted to them great care and consideration and lavished upon them the full richness of his mind. And many who did not fall under his charm as a teacher came under the fascination of his brilliance in conversation and debate, which was so large a part of the secret of his great influence on his contemporaries.

There were many features of capitalism that his cultivated liberal mind despised. He trenchantly exposed the nineteenth century tradition of laissez-faire capitalism, with its alleged "harmonies"; and he was to become the prophet of a cautious form of State capitalism (which might have meant several different things according to the state of class relations at the time). Yet entwined with his particular brand of neo-liberalism were certain strongly-marked conservative traits. While he wished well to the common man, and desired that his interests should be promoted, and while, after a visit to Moscow and Leningrad in 1925, he had some words of praise for the Soviet *regime* (though for its virtues as a "new religion" rather than for its economics) at a time when this was still unfashionable, he evidently disliked any notion that the proletariat should rule more than he disliked the rule of big business. Much of his aversion towards certain aspects of capitalism was the disdain of an intellectual aristocrat who despises the capitalist for his vulgarity and his parochial stupidity. In the Sidney Ball Lecture of 1924, published as *The End of Laissez-Faire*, he wrote:—

> "I think that Capitalism, wisely managed, can probably be made more efficient for attaining economic ends than any alternative system yet in sight, but that in itself it is in many ways extremely objectionable."

In the later developments of his economic doctrines he was to amplify that statement with a demonstration that the "economic harmonies" of traditional theory were built on shifting sand: that the normal condition of capitalism was one of excess capacity and unemployment; that this chronic malady tended to grow worse as capitalism developed; and that it could not be cured by monetary and banking policy (as earlier he had been inclined to believe) but only by the economic intervention of the State on an appreciable scale. Yet he seems never to have outlived the belief that what he termed "doctrinaire State Socialism" was "little better than a dusty survival of a plan to meet the problems of fifty years ago, based on a misunderstanding of what someone said a hundred years ago," and "in some respects a more muddled version of just the same philosophy as underlies nineteenth-century individualism." His faith in the power of human reason led him to think that intelligent advocacy would suffice to bring about some kind of "controlled capitalism," as an alternative to socialism; and in the 1920s he even preached the curious doctrine that "one of the most in-

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teresting and unnoticed developments of recent decades has been the tendency of big enterprise to socialise itself.'' In the concluding sentences of *The General Theory* he reaffirms his faith that ''the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas,'' and that ''soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil.''

About his economic theories of 1936 vintage there is little that can adequately be said within the compass of a brief note. A large part of their influence lay in their iconoclasm. To those reared in the academic tradition of economic thinking the new theory had the effect of startling paradox. For them its detailed exposure of the contradictory character of many of the assumptions on which the traditional view rested was a potent emancipating force. The citadel of orthodoxy was undermined from within, with devastating result. To ''economic heretics,'' and to Marxists in particular, much of this has seemed to be a lot of fuss about nothing; since they had always believed that an unemployed reserve was ''normal'' to capitalism and that capitalist production was held in chains by deficiency of demand. Nevertheless, the importance of the *critical* role that his demonstration has played should not be ignored.

The author of *The General Theory* admits in one much-quoted passage that he has simply rehabilitated an heretical tradition which previously ''could only live on furtively, below the surface, in the underworlds.'' Yet he was not one to be content for long in the company of heretics. In particular he had a blind spot in his usually tolerant mind for Marx, which prevented him from ever feeling anything but distaste for the writings of Marx. There certainly exist in *The General Theory* implications of a quite radical character for a critique of capitalism (implications which his more left-wing disciples have been at pains to underline and develop). At the same time implications of a different character are also contained therein: for example, that, given a correct financial policy *plus* a little state control of investment, capitalism, ''modernised'' but not transformed in its essential nature, could be made to work harmoniously and serve the public good. Perhaps it is not altogether surprising that the latter implications are the ones that he himself was inclined to stress (e.g., the dependence of interest-rates on monetary policy and the stimulation of investment), and the former implications (e.g., measures to increase mass consuming power, and the failure of consumption to rise with productive power as a reason for the breaking of a boom) are the ones that he was inclined to soft-pedal.

M. D.

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Famine

by F. Le GROS CLARK, M.A.

BEFORE these notes are published further measures to conserve grain may have been taken in this country; the Food and Agriculture Organisation will have held its meeting; and some forecast of the critical 1946 harvest may be possible, at all events for the northern hemisphere. I shall content myself with analysing certain of the essential elements in the situation.

Britain under the Famine.

This country is a very high importer both of grain and of animal foods produced through the feeding of grain to live stock. She, therefore, as a nation, makes a heavy claim upon the world's grain stocks. Without our food imports our daily consumption of food would fall to the level, expressed in terms of human energy, of some 100,000,000 of the inhabitants of the Continent, i.e., 1,500 calories or below. We thus have to consider how our food supplies are being maintained. It was clear about three years ago that, when the problem of relief supplies had to be handled, the countries receiving allocations under the Combined Food Board would probably be graded into five or six classes. There was not to be an equality of treatment. Allowing for no abnormal failure in the domestic harvests, the western countries would be entitled to a somewhat higher standard than the traditionally poorer countries of the Danubian Basin. The ex-enemy countries would in any case come low in the list. Britain, it was assumed, would continue to receive a specially high allocation of the available food. Britain is, of course, herself one of the three members of the Combined Food Board.

The Combined Food Board has no final jurisdiction over the actual disposal of the food produced in the various exporting countries. The Board, on whose various committees several of the smaller producing countries may be represented, can only recommend to governments how supplies shall be allocated; and during the war, when the needs of the combined armed forces dominated the situation, the recommendations of the Board were usually accepted. Since the close of hostilities the Board's decisions have had somewhat less weight with the countries concerned, though the Board remains a useful statistical office, mainly because it is staffed by men who know their job as farm economists and statisticians. But in practice the Board's recommendations tend to be adjusted by governments in accordance with political and economic considerations that lie outside the business of the Board. As matters stand, the priority position of this country, as a claimant on the world food markets, is still vaguely recognised; but this is due to her political and economic influence, to her ability to appeal to the goodwill of the Dominions and to her general readiness to fall in with American policy.

There is thus little force in the bargaining counters that may be handled by the British Government. It has, for instance, been suggested that we will agree to ration bread, if the United States administration takes a similar step. The circumstances of the two countries are so unlike as to make such a proposal little more than a political gesture. We have to import about four million tons of bread grain annually; we have had a scheme for bread rationing on the files since 1943; and our whole system of rationing has developed through stages of experimentation over a

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period of seven years. It is improbable that a wheat-producing country like the United States could evolve a scheme for efficient bread-rationing under nine months or more. The scheme would have to get past Congress; and it would be subject in its early stages to every sort of evasion.

Bread.

It must be realised that the relative ease with which rationing has been organised in this country is due to the fact that a large proportion of the supplies of rationed foods can be controlled in bulk at the ports. A country with heavy imports of fats, sugar and meat stands the risk of having its supplies cut off by blockade; but its control problems are greatly simplified. It is far more difficult to devise an effective system of procurement off the farms in such large producing countries as the United States or, at the other extreme, India and Siam. There is, of course, no reason why the United States should not make the trial; but we might as well recognise that the physical and social obstacles are immense. Whether or not we have to ration bread depends entirely upon the level of wheat imports we can expect over the next nine months. Possibly some decision will have been taken before these words are read; but I do not think it likely.

Since the early months of 1918, when in the first of the wars our wheat supplies were seriously threatened, it has remained a principle with successive Ministries of Food that bread rationing should be avoided as long as conditions would permit. The rationing of bread inevitably involves a country in some form of differential rationing between various types of consumers; and unless one is careful, the method may have to be extended to other foods, such as fats and meat. The rationing system enters, as it were, into a new element and may become far more complex. For one thing, it is not bread alone with which we should be concerned; it would be bread and flour together.

A considerable proportion of flour is not consumed in the form of bread, but in the form of biscuits, confectionery and home-baked pastries and scones. Probably the amount of flour used in Britain for these purposes is about 30 per cent.; in the years before the war the percentage was far higher. The figures are somewhat conjectural, but they cannot be much exaggerated. A cut in bread if flour were still uncontrolled would undoubtedly mean a rising demand for flour in the homes. On the other hand, a drastic curtailment of flour, for biscuits, cakes and pastries would not be followed immediately by an increased demand for bread. The demand might rise slowly, but only after a delay. Generally speaking, however, the rationing of bread and flour would have to be linked; and in effect the housewife would have to be permitted to take out a portion of her bread ration in the form of flour for domestic use. The custom of bread-baking in the home seems to have declined considerably in the course of the war; it had in any case been declining for the past twenty years; and one may doubt whether it now accounts for much more than 5 per cent. of all the bread consumed in the country.

We have now passed through several of the stages that might be traversed before a country is driven to the rationing of its bread. The proportion of the wheat berry utilised for flour has been raised to 90 per cent.; except in the last resource it is not likely to be raised much further. An admixture of 5 to 10 per cent. of barley flour can be used; and this means a cut in beer production. The total diversion of grain to human consumption involves, as it always must involve, some diminution in the supplies of bacon and eggs. The restriction

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of flour supplies to the manufacturer of biscuits and cake opens the question, where the products shall be distributed. On the whole, if the restriction goes far, it seems advisable to confine the manufactured products entirely to works' canteens, youth clubs, hospitals and other selected institutions. It is important at this period to prevent the emergence of a "black market" in the products or, at all events, of their sale to favoured customers.

In any case, bread-and-flour rationing must have the intention of reducing consumption or reducing waste, which seems still to be quite marked. This would inevitably mean a total fall in food consumption, unless we replace the bread and flour products with potatoes and vegetables. That will have to be faced. But at present there seems no immediate prospect of bread rationing, though none of us would care to predict. The more serious fact we have to face is that there is no prospect of an early term to the world shortage of grain, let alone to that of fats or meat. The coming harvest will bring a temporary relief, but not a permanent one; and in that case over the next year or two fresh and more drastic measures of control may have to be contemplated.

The 1946 *Harvest.*

This coming harvest may be said to be the most critical in world history. It must never be forgotten that in a famine certain factors have an accumulative influence. That influence may be overcome; but there is always a risk that it will have an effect on production. Men have been working hungry and with diminished energies; the slaughter of live stock, for which no fodder is available, may have deprived the land of its much-needed manure and of its draught power in many peasant countries; the reversion of land to jungle or weeds (and much land has so reverted in Burma, Siam and parts of Eastern Europe) may create pest and weed problems that the tired cultivator cannot readily combat. There is no question that large areas are at present starved of manure. While the Germans seem to have kept much of the farming land fairly well supplied with nitrates, there is no obvious sign that the plants for the fixing of atmospheric nitrogen are now working to any sufficient extent; and transport, coal and labour problems appear to be restricting the distribution of phosphates to soils that are seriously deficient in this fertiliser.

But there should, with a favourable season, be some increase in the Continental harvest. Some of the forecasts are not too depressing.

In France the acreage under winter wheat appears to be at least 50 per cent. above the 1945 level; but that is still below the pre-war average. The wheat harvest of Holland is estimated as possibly 25 per cent. above that of 1945, which was, of course, wretchedly low. In Austria, however, there has been a desperate shortage of fertilisers and farm machinery. A similar shortage affects Polish production; a large acreage in the east has been insufficiently cultivated owing to the extensive devastation and the shortage of labour, though in the west and in parts of eastern Germany conditions seem somewhat more favourable. The same effect of war devastation and mine fields has kept the sown acreage in Italy well below the pre-war average; the grain harvest is, however, expected to be 30 per cent. or more above the 1945 level. So far as these figures can be accepted, they indicate a prospect of a slight rise in European production in 1946; but there will still be serious deficiencies. As the late winter comes on and stocks are again nearing exhaustion in several countries, a grain import of about 12 million tons may again be required.

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There is, on the other hand, little prospect of a largely expanded grain acreage in the overseas exporting countries. The one country that has undertaken to increase its sowing perceptibly is Australia, where an extended acreage of more than 30 per cent. is proposed. In Canada the wheat acreage for 1946 is the same as it had been in 1945, 23.4 million acres; the barley acreage has been slightly increased, but is offset by a fall in oats production. The wheat acreage, it may be mentioned, is about 6 million acres below the 1939 level. The United States probable acreage under wheat of 71 million acres is about 3 per cent. above the acreage planted last year. Production, however, may be 10 per cent. below the 1945 level. There have been indications of drought affecting some areas; but it is as yet too early to say whether this will have a serious consequence.

It will be realised that grain production in the world is not likely to exceed to any marked extent that for 1945; and in that case it will have become imperative to organise world distribution efficiently by the late winter. Meanwhile the carry-over stocks in the exporting countries will be far lower than they were in 1945. By June, 1945, these wheat stocks amounted to some 22 million tons. The anticipated figure for June, 1946, has been one of 11 to 12 million tons; but this estimate was given in February last and the world needs will compel a cut of these stocks to possibly half their original estimated amount. In brief, the world will possess by the next harvest a very small reserve. We shall be subsisting upon our current income of food. The larger the proportion of grain of all kinds that has to be diverted for human food, the larger will have to be the fall in live stock, especially pigs and poultry.

Basic Causes.

The immediate cause of the famine has naturally been the combined effect of war and droughts. The droughts extended over a great part of the southern hemisphere, over much of India and over the Mediterranean Basin and the Southern Balkans. The question we have to ask is whether other factors intervened to prevent the United Nations from anticipating the possible extent of the disaster and from taking the necessary measures to insure against it. The droughts may not have been foreseen; but by the spring of 1944 it was already practicable to estimate from the known effects of war, what the ultimate extent of the devastation might prove to be. Assuming that the war progressed at a given rate through the various countries concerned first in Europe and later in Asia, it was possible to calculate that the total damage to transport, land, farm animals and labour would be enormous. Few areas were likely to be so far restored as to relieve the deficiency in the countries later liberated; and the total shortage in food could thus be estimated as of a high order. It is true that at that period the shortening of the war in Asia could not have been predicted; but such saving of the cultivated area as was realised through the collapse of Japanese resistance must be offset against the droughts that actually occurred.

In that case we can only say that insufficient preparations were being made in 1944-45 either to conserve large grain stocks or to awaken the public to the serious food situation that would follow the war. The acreage under wheat in the overseas exporting countries in 1945 was some 16 per cent. below what it had been in 1938. As is well known, considerable quantities of wheat were being fed to live stock, converted into commercial alcohol for the war effort or (in Argentina) burnt as fuel. There is, perhaps,

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no need to inquire into the relative value of utilising the wheat for these purposes. The fact remains that far larger stocks could have been built up as an insurance against the world deficiency. Why, then, were they not?

The answer is that the exporting countries were haunted by the fear of being left after the war with vast unmarketable stocks of grain on their hands. In the early years of the war considerable surpluses had accumulated in all the countries affected; and their governments were even then attempting to restrict the sown acreage. As a matter of fact, the sown acreage always tended far to outrun the proposed limits. But the sense of economic danger persisted both in official circles and among the farming communities. This was an echo from the experience of the years before the war, when the large wheat surpluses had brought a ruinous fall in farm prices. To say that farmers should, by 1945, have known better is to argue without full appreciation of the problem. A statistician might have reckoned that the world deficiency in 1946 was likely to demand all the wheat that overseas farmers could possibly have produced and stored. What the farmers required was an absolute guarantee that, if the deficiency did *not* occur, they would not be penalised for the thirty or forty million ton surplus they had accumulated. Such a guarantee was never forthcoming.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation.

This organisation, familiarly known as FAO, was finally established last November. It meets towards the close of the present month and before this article is published, in a conference, to which representatives of UNRRA, the Combined Food Board and other bodies are invited. Now it must be distinctly understood that FAO is not an executive or an "operative" organisation. It has no "super-national" powers. It can for the moment do little more than proffer advice, collect and publish facts and attempt to force nations into a position where they will co-operate in their common interests. Its funds are modest; and a fair proportion of its experts will presumably be loaned from the various member countries. It has by its original definition little or nothing to do with relief. What it will have achieved in its first conference this month, no one can foresee. What its primary aims *should* be, is perfectly clear.

The immediate need is for the establishment of some type of international disposal board to deal with bulk farm surpluses of wheat and maize, later of sugar, cotton, bacon and other products. The argument that there is, at present, no surplus of these commodities has no value. The reason why there is, on the contrary, a serious deficit, is simply that no such international disposal board was set up in 1944. Whether or not the board would be operated by FAO does not greatly matter. By preference it would be; but if it were brought to birth by FAO, that might be sufficient. Funds would have to be made available to the board from the member countries on some proportional basis, as are the funds of UNRRA. But, in fact, these funds might not have to be large, once the disposal system was working.

When surpluses of grain and other products begin again to rise above the effective demand (and we shall almost certainly experience some agricultural surpluses in the next six or seven years), there are several possible methods of disposal that will satisfy both the primary producers and the consuming world. The "buffer stock" principle can be applied, whereby excess crops are removed from the market in good seasons and held in reserve against poor harvests. The aim is to stabilise both producers' and consumers' prices in some measure. Secondly, apart from "buffer stocks,"

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a scheme of storing can be initiated to act as an insurance against the recurrence of famine conditions in any part of the world. Thirdly, the disposal of any additional surplus among communities too poor to meet the full market price would have to be undertaken. With the method of this process of disposal there is no space to deal. If it be said that this implies a kind of international philanthropy and the existence of pauperised countries, the only reply is that for some years to come there certainly will remain several very poor and necessitous countries. In any case this is the only machinery we can at present devise to prevent the restrictive practices in agriculture being maintained and even intensified. It is a vicious circle; and we have to break it or suffer for our negligence. The only way to break it is to insure the farmers against the tragic results to them of bumper harvests, which are only the evidence of their own good husbandry and of the fecundity of well-tended farm lands.

Other problems await FAO, but this is the fundamental problem. Even its partial solution will give rise to further problems of farm management, technical progress and market organisation; but that is only part of the process of the farming revolution. Meanwhile, there is one final proposal that must be made. We have absolute need now for some kind of Supreme Economic Reconstruction Council. The idea has been discussed in certain quarters for at least a year past; but with every month the need becomes more imperative. In theory the functions both of UNRRA and of the Combined Food Board will soon lapse. They must be replaced by a body possessing unlimited powers for dealing with the supply problems of fertilisers, seeds, farm equipment, fuel, transport and the rest. Of such a body it may be said that it would have no more control over the course of events than have UNRRA or FAO. That is quite true; but it is true that when the western countries are sufficiently alarmed to make an organisation work, they are quite capable of operating it. They usually give evidence of the importance they attach to an international body by sending as their representatives the men who can speak with a responsible voice and can pledge the co-operation of their countries. In other words, we should know whether the Supreme Economic Council was taken seriously by noting who were sent to participate in it by the countries most closely concerned in meeting the bill. But whether or not the new body would prove effective, some body of this nature we must have. There seems otherwise no chance of hastening the course of recovery in the devastated and disrupted countries.

Publications Received

BOOKS

Syria and Lebanon by A. H. Hourani (O.U.P., 18*s*, 402 pp.).

Federal Government by K. C. Wheare (O.U.P., 15*s*, 278 pp.).

From Savagery to Civilisation by Dr. Grahame Clark (Cobbett Press, 7*s*6*d*, 112 pp.).

A Short History of Labour Conditions in the British Empire. 1800 to the Present Day. Vol. 1, Part 2 by Jurgen Kuczynski (Frederick Muller, 8*s*6*d*, 194 pp.).

A Cartel Policy for the United Nations by the Editor, Corwin D. Edwards (Columbia University Press, 8*s*6*d*, 124 pp.).

World Labour Comes of Age by Betty Wallace (Lawrence & Wishart, 8*s*6*d*, 180 pp.).

The United States after the War. Introduction by C. W. de Kiewiet (Cornell University Press (Geoffrey Cumberledge) 15*s*6*d*, 180 pp.).

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Travel Notes No. 2

by R. PALME DUTT

April 2.

This morning the All India Radio came to ask me to broadcast for ten minutes as "India's Guest of the Week," with the proviso that the talk should not be political. I swallowed the proviso with the most benign affability, well knowing that the official mind regards politics as a peculiar isolated compartment concerned with elections, parties and constitutions and has not yet realised that any intelligent conversation nowadays is political. Next, the Indian Institute of International Affairs, the counterpart here of Chatham House, arrived to invite me to lecture. Hard on their heels arrived the Indian Council of World Affairs, which is a parallel body based on the Indian national movement, with Nehru as one of its vice-presidents. In accordance with my strictly impartial position here I accepted all three invitations.

April 3.

In New Delhi there is a Rural Uplift Exhibition in the grounds of the Viceroy's house. The organisers have worked with enthusiasm. There is a striking demonstration of the technical changes which could be made to improve Indian agriculture, of the new machines that could be used, how better seeds could multiply production, how land could be reclaimed, the improvement of farm buildings and housing and amenities and water supply. I asked what was being done to bring all this to the villages. The director said, "Alas, nothing! There is no money. This is only a model exhibition. We cannot even bring our exhibition to the villages."

In one section were shown samples of a model minimum balanced diet with the current prices. Seeing the model diet for an industrial worker, I asked the director how much it would cost an industrial worker with a wife and three children at present Delhi prices. He made the calculation and said Rs. 130/- a month. The top wage for a skilled textile worker in Delhi, including war allowances, would be Rs. 60/- a month, while the average level for an unskilled worker would be more like Rs. 30/- a month, and even as low as Rs. 20/- a month. A primary teacher gets Rs. 15/- a month or less than 5s. a week. Lest it be thought that these low money figures are counterbalanced by low prices, it is worth noting that the present price of milk in Delhi is 4d. a pint.

When I returned I opened my newspaper and found the following advertisement:—

"For Sale
'INDIA HOUSE'
IDEAL FOR MAHARAJAS, RAJAS, EUROPEANS, ZAMINDARS, CINEMA STUDIOS AND BANKS
A palatial modern bungalow with a compound of about 30 grounds

FEATURES: Marble and patent stone flooring, artistic marble and teakwood staircase with rosewood railings; drawing-room, ball-room, bedrooms, dining-room and sitting-room, furnished with up-to-date furniture; real Persian and Bokhara carpets, marble statues and stands; ceiling fans and concealed lighting; frigidaire; hot and cold water supply to six bathrooms; pumps with three electric motors; a well-laid-out and illuminated garden; tennis court; water fountain with automatic changing coloured lights.

Offers above rupees FOUR LAKHS (£26,000) will be considered."

Meanwhile the wheat ration in Delhi has been reduced to one half from April 8. This means a cut from 12 ounces a day to 6 ounces a day. And in Calcutta an official communication has been issued to allay alarm about deaths from hunger. The official

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statement denies the report that out of the twenty-three unidentified dead bodies picked up from Calcutta streets during the week ending March 30 five died of starvation. The official view is that only two of these died of starvation.

April 4.

The early bird catches the worm. This also applies to meeting with Mr. Gandhi. He fixed his appointment with me according to his usual practice, at 6.30 this morning. However, I was not in luck. After we had begun our talk Congress president, Maulana Azad, arrived and we had to break off for another time. Insisting, with the usual gracious friendliness which endears Mr. Gandhi to all his visitors, that he was really most keen on continuing this talk, he promised that he would fix a further appointment at the very first available moment and added, "You may look into my eyes and see that I am sincere." He was as good as his word and within a few days we were able to have a very interesting talk for an hour.

Among other things, we were able to talk of the question of Communism and the Congress and he expressed the friendliest goodwill with regard to my hope that the existing difficulties might be overcome. He told me that he had had talks with Indian Communist leaders and that he admired their devotion and ability, but that he felt an "impassable barrier" between himself and them. Puzzled at this, I enquired whether he felt any "impassable barrier" in speaking to me. He replied that he did not and that he felt full confidence in speaking to me. Probing the matter still further, I ventured to enquire what was this impassable barrier. He replied that it arose because the Communists believed in "secret force." On my asking for enlightenment on this, he explained that he understood that the Communists were in the habit of kidnapping and assassinating their political opponents. I endeavoured to explain that Communists had conducted a very long and famous and on the whole successful campaign against those revolutionary sections which believed in the use of assassination as a political weapon and had indeed succeeded in converting many of the former terrorists in a number of countries, including India, to Marxism. Mr. Gandhi replied that this was Stalin's method of dealing with his opponents. I endeavoured to explain that there seemed here to be some confusion with a very different question, namely, the action of a state; that every state has its criminal code and deals with offenders according to that code and that the Congress state would do the same. "No doubt," said Mr. Gandhi, "but the Congress State will not be my state."

From the above, and many other talks with Indian leaders, it is clear that some of the simpler misconceptions about Communism, which were growing a trifle crude for the Primrose League twenty years ago and recall the high old days of Bolo and the man with the bomb, are still widely prevalent in this country, where political cast-offs from other lands sometimes tend to silt up as in a backwater. Apart from Nehru, very few of the Congress leaders have at any time had much contact with international affairs; and even Nehru has to a considerable extent lost touch. As he confessed to me in the first talk I had with him, he had not read any newspapers for three months and had not followed international happenings.

One of the difficulties of the situation here, that has been strongly borne in upon me in the course of talks with all kinds of representatives is that the enforced isolation of India during six years of war has very greatly weakened contact with the general advance of the world democratic movement. The

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absolute monopoly of all news of the outside world solely through London semi-official channels inevitably colours opinion here and has made anti-Soviet prejudice easy, since the other side of the case is never presented. Not a single Indian newspaper has a correspondent in Moscow or to my knowledge anywhere in Europe, apart from London. Indeed, at a conference I had with Indian pressmen the first question they asked me was how it could be possible to arrange to get a correspondent in Moscow since there were no diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union. There is a real hunger for information, but the absence of supply leads often to unconscious acceptance of what is really imperialist anti-Soviet propaganda.

This was comically illustrated when at the Muslim League Legislators' Convention Sir Firoz Khan Noon, a former government minister and a man of no high political repute, created a sensation by threatening that if the British did not give them Pakistan they would turn to Russia to get it. This naive acceptance of British imperialist propaganda of the Russian bogey as the big bad wolf waiting to stretch out its paw to India has been so dinned into the public consciousness that when an Indian politician wishes to be really naughty he threatens to turn to Russia; and every Indian major political organisation tries to make this charge against its opponent. Nothing else also could explain the extraordinary passage in Nehru's new book, *The Discovery of India*, just published now in 1946 and being read at this moment on all sides, where he actually declares that all the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union have failed through losing touch with national sentiment and have consequently become weak and ineffective through their divorce from the nation. He showed keen interest when I endeavoured to indicate to him a little of what has been happening in Europe during these recent years. There is no doubt that much work will have to be done in rebuilding contacts between India and the world democratic movement.

April 5.

Today I have been among the legislators of the Central Assembly. After observing the debate from the President's gallery I had "tea on the terrace" (that is, in the inner courtyard of the Council Chamber) with the leader of the Congress Party, the Chief Whip and others, including Chaman Lal, singularly unchanged from Oxford days. It was a pleasant tea, but some of the minor practical disadvantages of the toga-like national costume which is today de rigueur for patriotic representatives was revealed when a waiter dropped the tea-service on the ground and soon after the cut feet of dignified legislators were having to be swathed in bandages.

All parliaments tend to be the same, and the Central Legislative Assembly is no exception, with the passionate interpellations and the frigid or evasive replies of ministers, relieved by the customary bonhomie and light humour of the Minister of Information, Sir Akbar Hydari (also singularly unchanged from Oxford days and with a Swedish wife). The only superficial difference (apart from the complete and open absence of power of this assembly) is that the acoustics are a little worse than usual, with the whirring of 13 electric fans overhead and that the European officials on the front bench speak more like borough councillors than ministers.

April 6.

A visit to Old Delhi affords a welcome relief from the horrors of New Delhi. Here in the centre of the old town, by the mosque and the bazaar and where the Communist Party Office

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flies the Red Flag from the mast on their building overlooking the town square, is teeming life and all the colours of the East. In the crowded streets it is impossible not to notice the rarity of old people and the abundance of babies and children with their large sensitive eyes and beautiful faces, everyone of which an artist would love to paint. As I looked at them laughing and playing, there swam before my eyes the words of the standard official economist of imperial India, Dr. Anstey, "How can we stem this torrent of babies?" How, indeed, can we stem this torrent of criminal "economists" who, instead of doing their duty to show how to adapt social organisation to the needs of human life, proclaim as the teaching of science to the world how to suppress human life in the interests of a vicious social system. From this outlook it is not such a far cry to Hitler's gas chambers and incinerators for the extermination of millions of human beings as the grand solution of the social problem.

April 7.

The Muslim League Legislators' Convention opened today. There was some shouting of slogans from the younger spectators; but as one looked at these placid, comfortable legislators in the main body of the assembly it was difficult to see in them the stuff of an incipient civil war. Compared to an English or American political gathering at a moment of excitement, the atmosphere was tepid. Despite the somewhat exaggerated fiery speeches (the most fiery of them, that of Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of Bengal, in moving the main resolution, had been, as the latter explained to me when I asked him for enlightenment on some of his more bloodthirsty passages, "Of course a little rhetorical.") this did not seem yet to have the smell of Ulster, 1914.

One minor feature about this convention, which might strike an outside spectator as odd, but which is, in fact, I believe, common to other political conventions here, including Congress, was the ostentatious display alongside the platform of the wealthier patrons who had paid high prices for their seats of honour. There they lolled with an air of fatuous self-complacency before the admiring audience in comfortable seats beside the platform, while over their heads was a conspicuous label marked Rs. 50/- (over £3). This plain designation of the fat stock with marked prices is an example of the engaging frankness of Indian politics which accompanies all the transparent duplicity and corruption. In English political organisations it is also not unknown for wealthy donors to be rewarded with conspicuous positions on the platform, but they do not carry the ticket of the price paid in their hats.

April 9.

A long talk with Vallabhbhai Patel, the famous "boss" of the Congress. There is no doubt that he is the strongest of the Congress leading team; he knows what he wants and how he proposes to get it; and it was refreshing to talk to him in contrast to the cloudy phrases and generalities which so often befog Indian politics. He is recognised by the Left as the most dangerous representative of the Right Wing and of Big Business interests and is frankly determined to crush all opposition which he may find in his way. The methods of the powerful machine he has built up, especially as shown in the recent elections, are by no means those of Gandhist purity or non-violence. At the same time his political judgment should not be underestimated and his devotion to the cause of the Congress and his closeness to Gandhi are unquestionable. It was characteristic that when we came to examine together some of the questions of Communism and the Congress, while other Congress leaders had all dwelt entirely on

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the ancient controversy of 1942 or the question of Pakistan, he concentrated attention on what he obviously recognised as the decisive issue, the naval rising and the Bombay mass movement, to which he proclaimed his opposition. Nevertheless, he also expressed full friendliness to the desirability of reconciliation with the Communists and letting the past difficulties be buried; and I carried away the impression from this as from other talks that although in India there are undoubtedly difficulties and dangerous signs which may increase, the lines are not yet so absolutely rigid, nor is there yet the same venomous fanatical anti-Communist hatred as with the old type of European Social Democracy or the kind of Transport House representative who would not be able to mention the word Communism even in a talk with a foreign visitor without getting a fit of apoplexy.

April 10.

Today I recorded my broadcast for the All India Radio. . . .

All India Radio is a spacious and modern equipped building which was completed in 1943—thus showing that official India did not allow itself to be unduly discomposed by the war against Japan (''Thank God, we didn't have to invade Japan'' said a senior military officer to me on one occasion; ''our part of it was being organised in India and the mess would have been unholy).'' On being shown around I asked my guide how they grappled with the problem of the famous 220 languages of India. He smiled and showed me a list of their Indian transmission services. Ten languages covered, he said, over 90 per cent. of the population. These were Hindustani, Pushtu, Punjabi, Bengali, Assamese, Gujerati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. For a population of 400 millions this amounts to rather less than a similar number in Europe.

The same evening I received a shock. I had really imagined that the horrors of New Delhi struck everyone in the eye. At a cocktail party given by *Time* and *Life* and attended by a curiously mixed assembly, from Alexander and Government ministers and high military officers to Nehru and Mrs. Naidu, as well as the common fry of journalists, I found myself in conversation with an elderly government official perspiring in a boiled shirt and mentioned to him that I had visited the A.I.R. that afternoon and noted the modern equipment of the building. He replied in melancholy tones, ''But do not you think that that building is sadly out of keeping with the harmony of our architecture in New Delhi? After all, when we have achieved a really distinctive design of architecture in New Delhi it is such a pity that it should be marred by an unsuitable building.'' Thus the truth dawned on me that there really exist admirers of the gaudy white city architecture of New Delhi. Evidently it has been built to impress the Occidental mind.

April 12.

An interesting talk with Cripps, who spared me half an hour at the end of a full day (all the more full since he continues to handle Board of Trade matters from here). The interior of the Viceroy's House carries a curious musty air of Victorianism in the furniture and decoration, which is somehow expressive of the spirit of Anglo-Indian officialdom. The talk proved illuminating on many points with regard to the genesis of the Mission, its methods of working, his own judgment of the different political forces in India and the perspective for the future. Not all the judgments of the political situation in India or predictions of the future evolution of Congress and of Indian politics seemed to me entirely justified, but they threw much light for me on the current British official policy and

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the probable outcome of the negotiations.

April 13.

Tonight there took place in the centre of Old Delhi a meeting called by the Nationalist Muslims (Congress supporters) and I was naturally interested to see the response. It was attended by 80,000, who sat cross-legged on vast pieces of matting arranged on the ground. The meeting began at 9 p.m. Towards midnight Nehru turned up and spoke. The principal speaker, a distinguished Muslim Urdu orator, whose classic purity of diction is said to hold audiences entranced irrespective of politics, spoke for six hours. The meeting broke up at 6 a.m. It is characteristic of the isolation of foreign journalists here that next morning, when I attended a customary little Sunday morning gathering of about a dozen foreign journalists, including the representatives of *The Times* (a rather embittered representative whose acid judgment is that "there are no democrats in India"), the *New York Times*, the B.B.C., *Daily Herald*, *News-Chronicle*, etc., I found that none of them was aware of this meeting having taken place and in view of their unquestioning acceptance of the official thesis of Muslim support of the League as 100 per cent., were considerably surprised to hear of the size of the meeting and its peaceful character.

It should be added that next evening the Muslim League held a meeting which was attended by 120,000. Probably the major portion of both audiences were the same. But both meetings went off in a perfectly peaceable manner. The atmosphere of incipient civil war is perhaps not quite as tense as some interested propaganda, which dwells on stories of the reported wholesale buying of knives and sticks in New Delhi seeks to insist; though undoubtedly an unfavourable future development of the political situation may lead to grave results.

April 14.

A three hours' talk with Mr. Jinnah. Next day my fellow journalists greeted me with the jibe, "So you are in the Court circular!" It appears that the Muslim League organ *Dawn* carries a small rubric, "Qaid-a-Azam," recording underneath the guests received and other activities of the great man during the previous day. The conversation covered much ground of interest, but did not provide the basis of an interview for publication. I had taken the opportunity to ask Mr. Jinnah some of the questions which are often raised by Left opinion in England with regard to the programme of Pakistan, and he very kindly gave me full answers which I noted down. He promised to look them through subsequently to see whether it was suitable for publication. Next day, however, after seeing my notes he agreed that they were a perfectly correct record of what he had said and a perfectly fair summary of his views, and that they contained no confidential matter other than his publicly known views. On being invited to make any deletions, additions or alterations he might wish he said there was nothing to change. Nevertheless he did not appear to relish the idea of these questions and answers without comment appearing in cold print; and he found himself unable to consent to publication; so that was the end of that.

April 17.

The memorandum presented today by P. C. Joshi of the Communist Party to the Cabinet Mission has had an excellent press and won very favourable opinions from the most varied quarters. It is a clear, practical, constructive and (what is less usual for Communist publications here) concise document. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is reported to have said that it represents,

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of course, the only real solution to which they will all have to come in the end, but may take some years to reach. Devadas Gandhi, whom I happened to meet on the eve of his departure for London and America in search of newsprint, asked me if I had written it. I explained that I had never seen the document until it appeared, and asked his opinion of it. He replied (and his opinion is worth noting, since this son of Gandhi and editor of the leading Congress journal, the *Hindustan Times*, is no friend of the Communists) that he thought it a first-class document. The document kills stone-dead the sedulously fostered myth that the Communist Party of India has placed itself behind the official programme of Pakistan and the Muslim League. Of course, the usual process now happens. The Communist Party policy of national self determination clearly set out in the 1942 resolution and again in the election programme was universally distorted by hostile critics as 100 per cent. support of Pakistan. As usual, the hostile headlines won the ear of 99 per cent. of the public who never saw the actual policy statements. Now that the memorandum to the Cabinet Mission has compelled recognition of the real policy, the wiseacres wag their heads and say, "ah, the Communists are coming to their senses at last!"

Letter from Dr. Sjahrir (Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic)

(*We are very pleased to have the opportunity of printing this letter.*—Ed. L.M.)

Djakarta, March 23, 1946.

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the Indonesian Republic and our people I thank you for your cordial letter of March 6 and I beg you to convey our thanks and sympathy to all the British people, especially to the workers, who, at the instigation of your Party, have supported our struggle for freedom and democracy from the foundation of our Republic.

We are aware that our fight is an important part of a world cause, the cause of freedom, democracy and world peace and that is why we hold on with the more tenacity.

We know that if we win we will further the cause of all progressive people of the world and that if we lose, it will mean a set back for the same cause.

The knowledge that we have friends like you all over the world strengthens our hearts and the conviction that in the end we must win.

We may have difficult days ahead, but if you and the British workers keep on insisting to stop the use of British soldiers in Indonesia for Imperialist aims of the British and the Dutch Imperialists, we are sure we will succeed.

Merdeka!

SJAHRIR.

P.S.—Before my exile in 1934 I was a diligent reader of the LABOUR MONTHLY and that is why Mr. Palme Dutt is not unknown to me. I read his *Modern India* as early as 1929. The more pleasure to receive your letter signed by him.

To the Communist Party of Britain
Executive Committee,
16, King Street, London, W.C.2.

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Book Reviews

The Outlook for Visual Arts

The Visual Arts (A Report sponsored by the Dartington Hall Trustees and published on behalf of the Arts Enquiry by P.E.P., 10*s*6*d*).

THE ARTIST 's job in Britain is conducted on the level of a peasant industry and suffers from all the abuses which fall on an outworn economy in an industrial age. In fact, after reading the Arts Enquiry report on the conditions under which the visual arts are practised in our country, one wonders at the persistence of artists in their work. One can only assume that a peasant economy breeds a peasant toughness to see them through. Ten thousand individuals are artists, according to the 1931 census. Today not more than seven hundred painters and thirty sculptors earn a living by their art. The rest survive by a variety of expedients which they adopt to give them time to paint or carve. By one means or another they clear a little space to live and work in a jungle which is constantly threatening to move in on them.

The first of the Arts Enquiry reports, sponsored by Dartington Hall to give an account of the place of the arts in our national life, ranges from art-teaching to the administration of public art galleries and from commercial hack-work to the fine arts. The authors have brought together material which gives a clear, if somewhat static picture, of the jungle. The tangled relations between artist, dealer, patron, employer, teacher and state are patiently gone over and the whole unedifying mess set out in the report. Two major proposals, one for an Arts Council and one for a Design Council, are made. Since the visual arts group made its report government bodies which are substantially the same as those recommended have been set up as the Arts Council and the Council of Industrial Design. This is already a step forward, but, oddly enough, the weakest part of the present framework of the arts in Britain is handled with less criticism than one might have expected. The inadequacy of art schools is admitted, but no recommendation is made. This is a curious lack of foresight on the part of the visual arts group, since very soon both Councils will be facing a glut of labour in their fields and not very highly skilled labour at that. The war created conditions in which, for the first time for many years, artists were able to earn a good living. The result was that the art schools filled up and are now overcrowded and understaffed. It seems likely that unless the art schools are re-equipped and properly staffed and reasonably high standards of competence are laid down the efforts of both Councils will be swamped. Good intentions count for nothing in art and unless a general high level of performance can be kept up these two Councils, of which much is expected today, will fall into the same discredit as did earlier attempts.

JAMES BOSWELL.

World Trade Unionism

World Labour Comes of Age by Betty Wallace (Lawrence and Wishart, 8*s*6*d*).

UNLIKE ANOTHER book recently reviewed in these columns, this had not the resources of Chatham House or the International Labour Office behind it. It has the advantage, however, of starting with the *movement* in mind—the millions of men and women, that is, who make up the trade unions in the various countries, elect their officials and, in the long run, have to solve their problems. As a result, the book is alive, fresh and invigorating to read and contrives in 180 pages to convey an immense amount of essential information about the world trade union movement today.

The first part gives a factual description of the unions in all countries, with names and statistics and their most pressing problems briefly touched upon—in a way rarely attempted before. The second and longer part gives a valuable historical account of how the World Federation of Trade Unions came into being—from the T.U.C. initiative of 1941 for an Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee to the Paris Congress of October, 1945, which founded the Federation. It is detailed and balanced, with fair summaries of all important debates and full texts of main documents. Mr. G. A. Isaacs, now Minister of Labour, warmly commends the

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book to all trade unionists in his introduction: it is, in fact, an excellent advocate of trade union internationalism as well as an important work of reference.

Betty Wallace, who was the first secretary of the prewar World Youth Congress, dedicates the book to the memory of Capt. Michael Wallace, her husband and colleague in the youth movement, who was killed in Italy. It is a worthy tribute and encourages one to ask for further studies of the international trade union movement from the same pen.

A. R.

The "Freedom" of the Press

Press, Parliament and People by Francis Williams (Heinemann, 8*s*6*d*).

LIKE MANY newspapermen, Mr. Francis Williams has the ability to marshal the facts and at the same time turn a blind eye to the picture they present. His purpose in writing this well-informed, lively and shrewd book is not quite clear; but what he has succeeded in doing is to throw considerable light on the dark corners of our democratic system. He may even be a little embarrassed by the brightness of his searchlight, but cynicism—that opiate of all journalists—serves to mist his spectacles. During the past ten years, the author has been close enough to the direction of this country's government to shed most, if not all, of his illusions. There is still sufficient of the idealist in him to quote with approval the words of Delane of *The Times* nearly one hundred years ago on the function of the Press. . . . "to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the events of the time and instantly, by disclosing them, to make them the common property of the nation." But his experience has demonstrated to him that no capitalist modern newspaper can live up to this conception.

His association with the *Daily Herald* as one of the youngest editors in Fleet Street was a chastening affair. Following the gallant failure of George Lansbury to run the *Daily Herald* as a real workers' paper, £2,000,000 was sunk into it by Odhams and this gigantic concern naturally wanted its money back. "Editorially the *Daily Herald* was under the constant compulsion to be bright. The jaundiced political critic who said of it in its first few months as a popular paper that the only way to get a statement of serious political aims in its columns was to print them on the back of a bathing beauty was exaggerating, but there was a tiny grain of truth in his remarks. The first consideration had to be circulation." Every year at Labour Party conferences the *Daily Herald* policy was subjected to the biting criticism of the rank and file member. Williams and Bevin were usually put up to reply and the author confesses that he often found himself defending policies he himself disliked. "Nevertheless, with Bevin's assistance we always succeeded in getting a big vote of confidence." However, Williams finally had to leave the *Herald;* his articles were too serious.

The function of the *Daily Herald* was to be bright, but it always lagged behind the *Daily Express* both in presentation and in optimism. This was the "there will be no more war" period. Chamberlain and Hoare exercised terrific pressure on the political and diplomatic writers to be bright and cheerful while Hitler was swallowing one country after another. In wartime, during which Mr. Williams was the chief of the Press and Censorship Division at the Ministry of Information, the technique of influencing the Press by every means—ranging from the dry martini to plain, ungarnished intimidation—was developed and improved upon. He reveals Mr. Churchill as particularly sensitive of criticism. He recognises that the British public will always get a distorted picture of international affairs all the time the present Foreign Office set up exists: but he hopefully looks to Mr. Bevin. "Mr. Bevin may, of course, reorganise the Foreign Office. I rather think he will. And drastically. He is not the man to mind breaking a few traditions." No doubt, it is this kind of disappointment to a good-natured temperament which accounts for a number of blind spots in an otherwise keen observer. How otherwise explain why a detailed study of the Press and its role in society can omit reference to the struggle to build up a genuine workers' news service?

H. C.

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